For the die hard enthusiast of Japanese hobby culture

RAIJIN GAME & ANIME

雷神

TM

STRAIGHT FROM NIPPON!

ISSUE 4

Special Feature:

GAME SHOW BLOWOUT!

THE CONSOLE WAR CONTINUES TO HEAT UP IN JAPAN!

OUR PICKS FROM THIS FALL'S TGS!
Zelda No Densetsu (GC), Unlimited Saga (PS2), DOA: XVB (Xbox), and more!

A BREAKDOWN OF EACH PLATFORM IN JAPAN!
Where does each one stand in the market?

Exclusive info from SEGA: Focus on games, anime, & more

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Editor's Message

To all the anime and video game fans across the U.S.: we gladly welcome you to the world of RGA.

The editorial staff here has been both pleased and overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response to our publication, which has truly exceeded all expectations. We would like to thank you wholeheartedly for your support.

You can continue to count on RGA to bring you the latest, most detailed information available to the hundreds of thousands of followers of the Japanese anime and video game scene in the U.S.

As you may already know, RGA is the sister publication of RAIJIN COMICS, the first-ever weekly manga anthology in the U.S. RAIJIN COMICS packs English versions of some of the single most acclaimed and representative manga titles out of Japan into one magazine. It is through these publications in Japan that manga migrates toward even more mainstream formats such as anime and video games. In that sense, faithfully reading dedicated magazines such as RGA to familiarize yourself with the manga original will allow you to enjoy their anime and video game counterparts that much more.

We highly recommend that you read both RGA and RAIJIN COMICS together so you can increase your enjoyment of Japanese animation and video games to the max, while getting the nitty-gritty on the manga and anime materials on which they're based. If you're a fan of these three pillars of Japanese entertainment, you would certainly do well to check out both publications.

RGA and RAIJIN COMICS are put together by local Japanese staff who share the same passion for this material as you do. While we take the pleasure of using our publication to provide a wealth of exciting information directly from the source, we maintain the greater hope that it will serve to bring together fans of Japanese hobby culture here in Japan and overseas.

Let us know what you're thinking! Please inform us of any comments and opinions you may have so that we can enhance your experience with the world of RGA even more.

RAIJIN Game & Anime
Editorial Staff

RAIJIN G&A GAME ANIME

issue 4

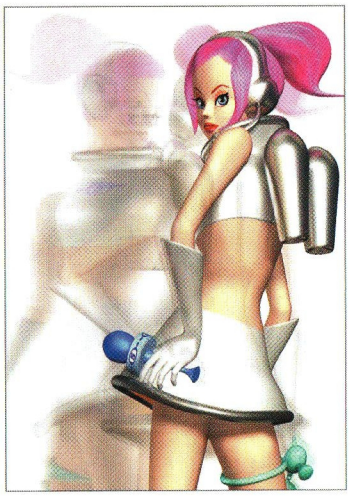
PUBLISHED BY	GUTSOON!ENTERTAINMENT
EDITED BY	COAMIX INC. / SUPERSONIC INC.
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	HORIE NOBUHIKO
GENERAL PRODUCER	NEGISHI TADASHI
CHIEF PRODUCER	TAKAHASHI NOBUYUKI

STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF	WATABE KOICHI
EDITORIAL DIRECTORS	WATANABE MASATOSHI NISHIYA HIDEAKI
EDITORS / WRITERS	SHIMIZU KOJI / ISOGAI AYAKO KANAMOTO TARO
TRANSLATORS	SHOU MICHAEL SCHAUERTE MARY KENNARD
ART DIRECTOR	HARIGAYA SHUNJI
DESIGNERS	MORIYA HIROMI / SATO YURI
PHOTOGRAPHER	TAKENAKA TOMOA

COVER STORY

She bangs, she moves! Continuing to keep gamers entranced in Japan is the funky Ulala of **Space Channel 5**, who graces our cover this week. Check out the Game Focus section for the scoop on the newest title featuring the futuristic reporter with the most!



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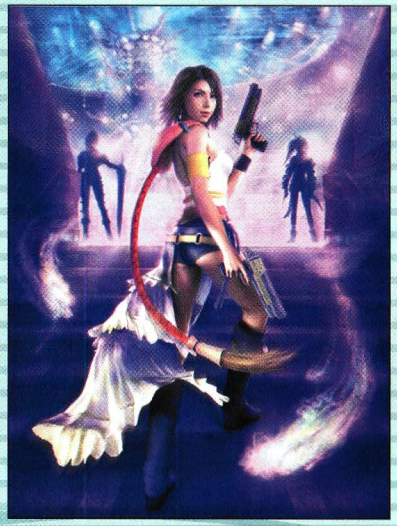
Today's Topics

Topic #1 GAME

THE DIRECT SEQUEL TO FFX LOOKS TO SURPASS IT!

Word is out that **Final Fantasy X-2**, an entirely new sequel to the PlayStation 2 title "Final Fantasy X" released in July of last year, will be available in Japanese stores in March 2003. The first direct sequel of an individual "Final Fantasy" title was produced on the basis of expressed demand by series fans, and also represents the complete edition of the special "Final Fantasy X: Another Story" teaser footage included in the "Final Fantasy X International" edition released in January of this year.



The game begins two years after Sin was defeated in "FFX". Machines have suddenly sprouted up everywhere in Spira, and the existence of Chocobos is gradually beginning to phase out. Our heroine Yuna spends her days peacefully but continues to feel the presence of "him" deep inside her heart. Upon being shown a picture of "him" by her former comrade Luc one day, Yuna resolves to set off on a journey in search of "he" who was thought to have disappeared. But this journey also represents a search to regain the Yuna that she left behind that day. Unlike that of two years prior, this adventure is one of her will. It is also one for her own sake.

FFX-2 is not only the first direct sequel to a title within the same series; it is also the first installment to feature a female as the main character. Furthermore, the story

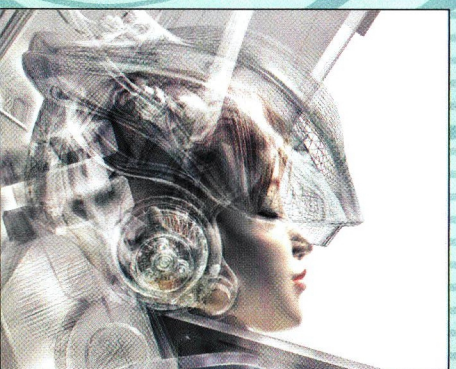
The FF X-2 logo: Yuna, Ruc and a mysterious female character. Rumor has it that an "X-3" is on the way as well.

changes depending on the actions of the player, and the action element has also been intensified though the addition of a previously unavailable jump feature to access areas that couldn't be reached in the original "FFX"

Starting with "FFXI", this year has already seen a rush of releases by Square that also included "Unlimited Saga" and the Windows(R) version of "FFX". There's no reason to think the company will cease this momentum even after the release of **FFX-2** next spring.

Topic #2 GAME

EVER WISH YOU WERE THE TWO GUYS IN "WEIRD SCIENCE"?



Scheduled for release next spring is **N.U.D.E.@** Natural Ultimate Digital Experiment, a collaborative effort between Microsoft and the renowned publisher Red Entertainment known for "Sakura Taisen" ("Sakura Wars") and "Gungrave".

In **N.U.D.E.**, players attempt to essentially raise their own robot thorough using a microphone to communicate with it via voice input. As this robot starts off with basically a blank slate for a mind, it's up to the player to develop it to the point where it has complex feelings and a personality. Unlike previous voice-recognition games,

this one uses a voice-mixing system that operates in real-time rather than one based on the simple playback of pre-recorded voice files.

N.U.D.E. continues the recent trend of communication-based games such as "Dokodemoissho" ("Together Wherever We Go") and "Seaman" in Japan.

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Topic #3 TOY

THE IMAGINARY WORLD OF RAY HARRYHAUSEN IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND!

The confectionary company Furuta, famous for its *shokugan* series, plans to promote a new line of products featuring Ray Harryhausen figures. Harryhausen, widely referred to as the wizard of stop-motion animation, was a awarded the Gordon E. Sawyer Award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 1922 and is acknowledged for his work in Japan as well by distinguished creature designers such as Kaida Yuji (monster artist), Nagai Go (manga artist), and Nirasawa Yasushi (model/figure designer).

While the abovementioned Furuta figures hover about the 10-cm range in height, their high quality is clear from the images on the right. Accompanying favorites such as "Cyclops" and "Ymir" is one secret figure for a total of eleven. Collect all eleven figures and recreate Harryhausen's imaginary world!

Topic #4 BOOK

DID WUFEI EVER RIDE A MOTORBIKE IN GUNDAM WING? REFRESH YOUR MEMORY!

A new book focusing exclusively on the motorcycles featured in high-octane anime scenes has arrived. Over 300 bikes are covered in this book, including Kaneda's bike from "Akira" and G-3 from "Gatchaman" ("Battle of the Planets" in the west). Also featured are more obscure bikes like the one Kenshiro's older brother Jagi rode in "FHokuto no Ken " ("Fist of the North Star") and Nikoras D. Wolfwood's bike in "Trigun".

There used to be considerable circulation of anime-based books focusing on equally hardcore or obscure elements, but lately these are considered rare items. Hopefully this book and others to follow will serve to spark a revival.

RAIJIN RECON

The antagonist from the flagship anime of a Japanese animation production studio that has both an official fan club and website in the U.S. as well may have his(or her...?) own feature soon! Hint: the character is from a long-running series.

Director Oshii Mamoru, featured in RAIJIN G&A #3, is rumored to be preparing his hit police action series set in a futuristic Japan for another big-screen release! Will this be the comeback of the work that made both Oshii and anime in general household words worldwide...?

Ray Harryhausen Creatures TM&©2002 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved. © NIPPON Publishing Co., LTD.

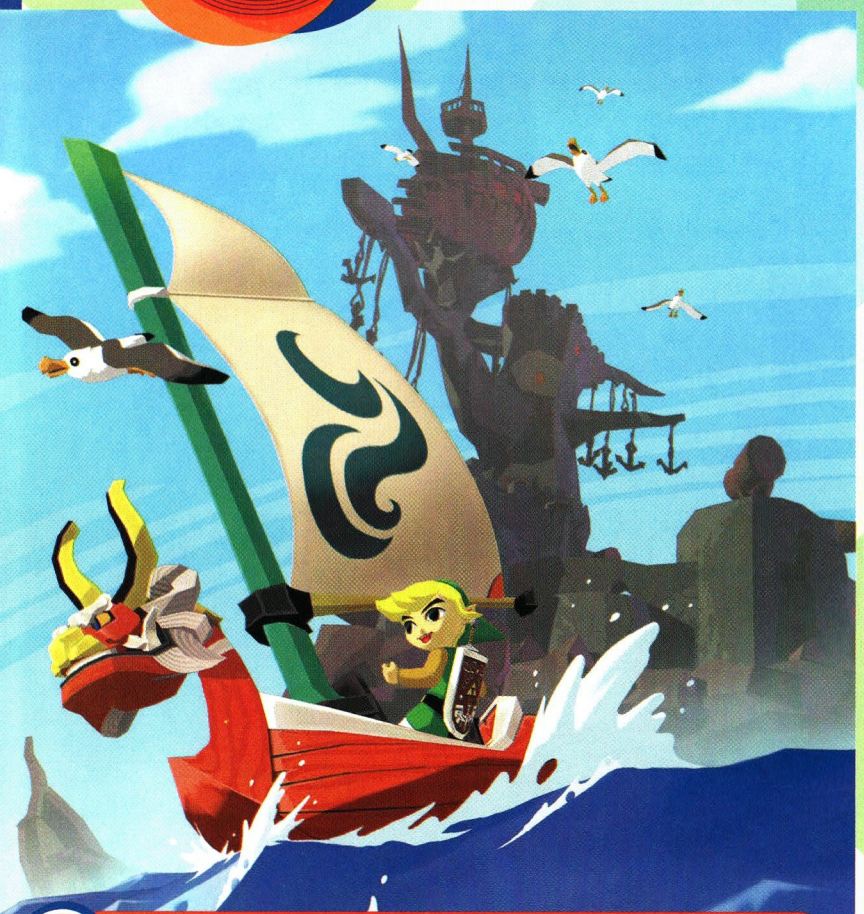
SPECIAL FEATURE

Japan's Hot New Winter Titles!

THE PERIOD BETWEEN DECEMBER AND JANUARY IN JAPAN REPRESENTS THAT DURING WHICH VIDEO GAMES FOR HOME CONSOLES PEAK IN SALES. IT THEREFORE GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT JAPANESE GAME PUBLISHERS TRY TO CAPITALIZE ON THIS PERIOD BY RELEASING A STRING OF STRONG TITLES FOR THE CONSOLE MARKET. CHECK OUT THIS PLATFORM-SPECIFIC PEEK OF WHAT LOOKED TO US TO BE THE MOST PROMISING RELEASES FOR THIS WINTER!

GAMECUBE

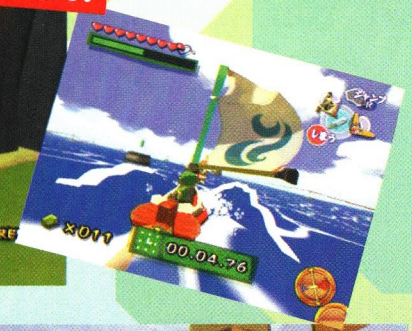
Will the return of Zelda reestablish Nintendo's domination?



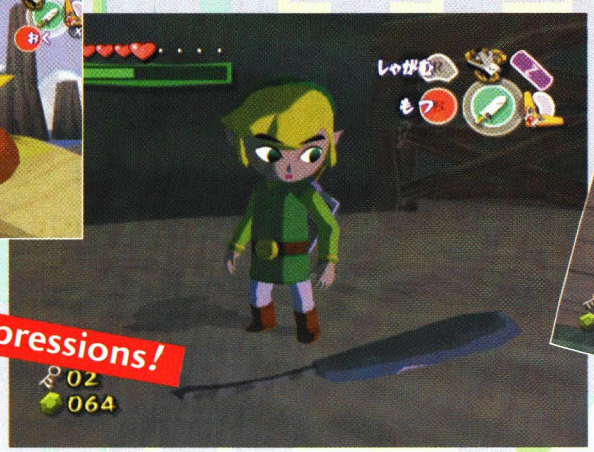
RPG **Zelda No Densetsu** *Kaze No Takuto*
by Nintendo

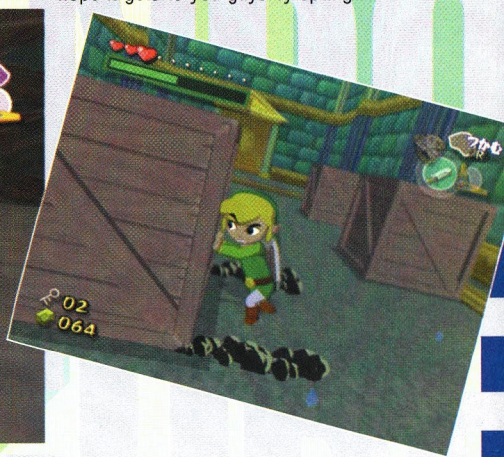
Even those who aren't terribly into gaming could tell you that "Nintendo" is the name behind a video game-publishing giant. This giant however has not shown the momentum expected of it in Japan with its primary platform, the GameCube. Despite high-quality releases such as "Luigi's Mansion", "Pikmin" and "Mario Sunshine", and the enormous success of these titles among younger gamers, the low actual available amount of games for the platform relative to its rival, the PlayStation 2, is holding it back. This, as well as the somewhat youth-oriented content of both many of its titles and the image surrounding the console itself, is effectively serving to stave off the primary video game purchasing base as represented by individuals in their late teens and twenties, who generally have more diversified and adult tastes when it comes to gaming.

But even with its main platform experiencing somewhat of a struggle with respect to the PS2, Nintendo has continued to perform remarkably business-wise - remarkable to the extent that in the last ten years, despite Japan's wrestling with a serious depression, the company has continued to boast exceptionally high profit figures. However, that which has produced and continues to produce this profit, both in Japan and overseas, is in actuality the sales generated from Nintendo's Game Boy series and its "Pokemon" franchise. It goes without saying that as far as handhelds are concerned, the company is in a market position of unquestionable dominance.



"CELDA" WHUT!? THIS GAME IS THE BOMB!





Without getting too off-track, allow u.s. to summarize the above by saying that up until now, the GameCube in Japan has been somewhat lacking insofar as Nintendo's adult fans are concerned. With the high quality and quantity of titles slated for release this winter however, let it be said that there is more than enough potential for that situation to change.

Heading this solid lineup is **Zelda No Densetsu: Kaze No Takuto** (widely and currently referred to as "The Legend of Zelda: Baton of the Wind" in English), the latest installment in Nintendo's flagship "Zelda" series. The first thing we would like our readers to notice upon examining the shots we've provided of this game is that these are not in-game cinemas but actual game screens! Players will be able to manipulate their on-screen character in this world as you see it. As originally demonstrated during this year's holding of the game show C3, **Kaze No Takuto** literally allows you to move around in a cartoon-like world. Those who had attended this screening at C3 or have had the pleasure of viewing available movies of the game in motion will tell you it has to be seen to be believed.

Ironically, the various commands used in the game - jumping, pushing, climbing, swinging your sword, picking items up - are extremely simplified, to the point where all of them can be performed with the use of practically just one button. This simplicity in a sense serves to complement the surreal feeling of being placed inside a cartoon environment.

The mastermind behind the development of this title, Nintendo's Miyamoto Shigeru, has stated that he wants players to enjoy simply manipulating their character on-screen prior to jumping into the actual story and battle sequences. From our experience with **Kaze No Takuto**, it's safe to say he definitely got the job done.

The sole unfortunate bit we heard about the game is that it's not scheduled to be released in the U.S. for sometime. Let's hope it gets to you guys by spring.

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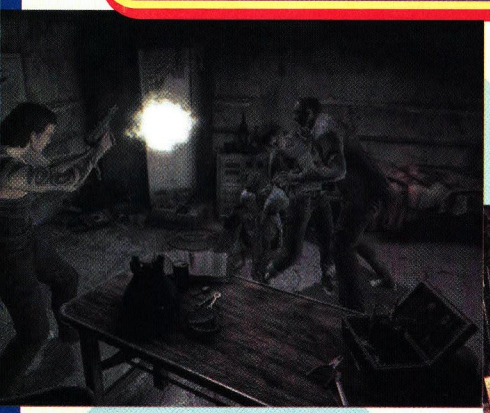
GAMECUBE

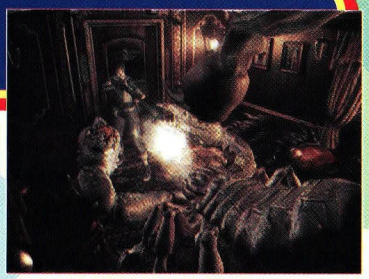
Third-parties are also in effect!

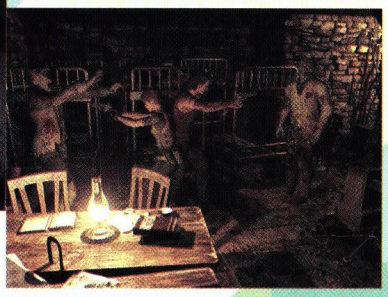
ACT

Biohazard 0

by Capcom







The prologue to the "Biohazard" series' newly-incorporated "Patner zapping system" allows you to switch between the 2 main characters' points-of-view!

ADV

Sonic Mega Collection

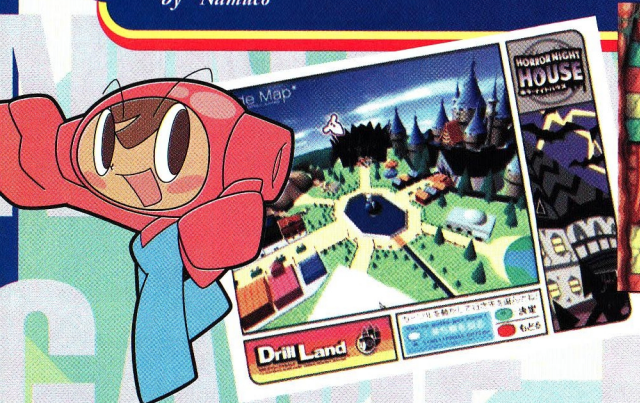
by Sega

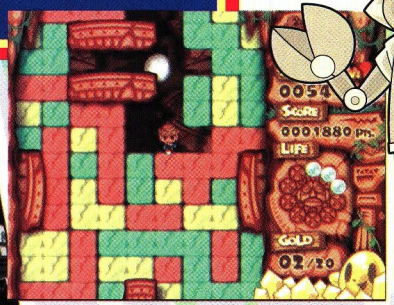
All of Sega' old-school Sonic titles packed into one GameCube disc! This one will take you a while to play through.

PUZ

Mr. Driller: Drill Land

by Namuco





Set in "Drill Land", a theme park located 500m underground, this title features a colorful cast alongside its main star Hori Susumu!

So, as Nintendo prepares its GameCube to give the PS2 a run for its money, third-party software publishers are also getting some of their major franchises in gear to give the system a push.

The latest installment by Capcom in its mega-popular horror action-adventure series "Biohazard" ("Resident Evil" in the West), **Biohazard 0** ("Resident Evil 0") offers as its name suggests a glimpse of the timeline leading up to titles in the series currently available. Naturally accompanying this shift in time frame is a slew of new mysteries and puzzles that require solving. A startling contrast to the Marchen-like fantasy world of "Zelda", the utter realism offered by the visuals of **Biohazard 0** will project gamers into a nightmarish world.

Sonic Mega Collection represents a complete collection of all titles featuring Sega's mascot that appeared on the Mega-Drive (Genesis in the West), from the original installment to "Sonic 3D Blast". With as many as seven separate titles available for play, Sonic the Hedgehog fans would be hard pressed to pass this disc up.

Mister Driller: Drill Land continues the string of continuously successful entries in the popular Namco action-puzzle series. While the series appears at first glance to be of the "Tetris" variety, its cute characters and concept of digging into the ground provide it with a twist.

Continued on P.10!

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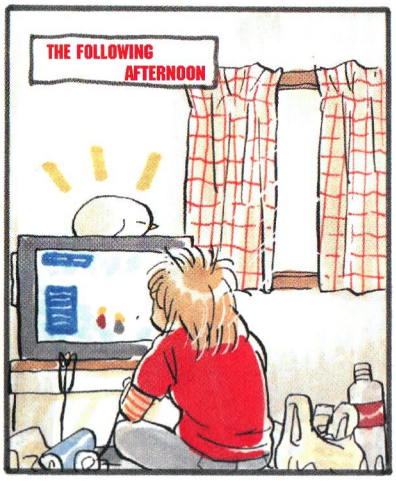
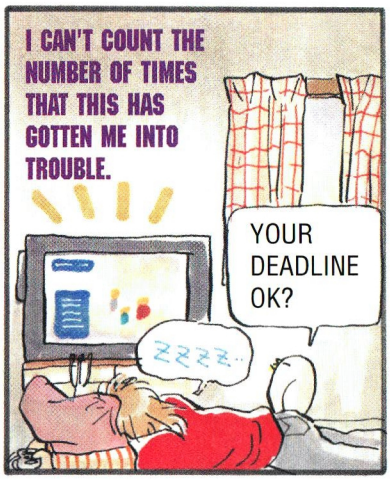
QB and VIVI's OTAKU kan

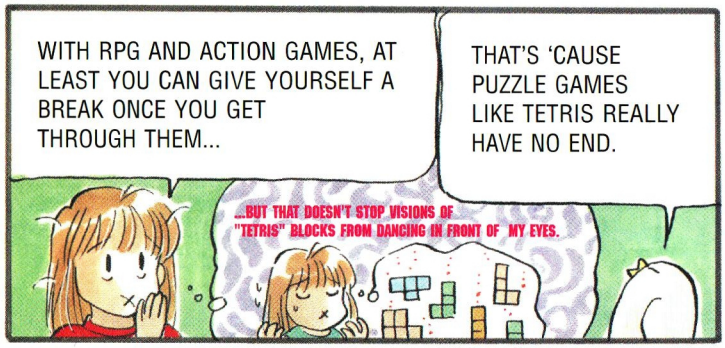
ACT 3

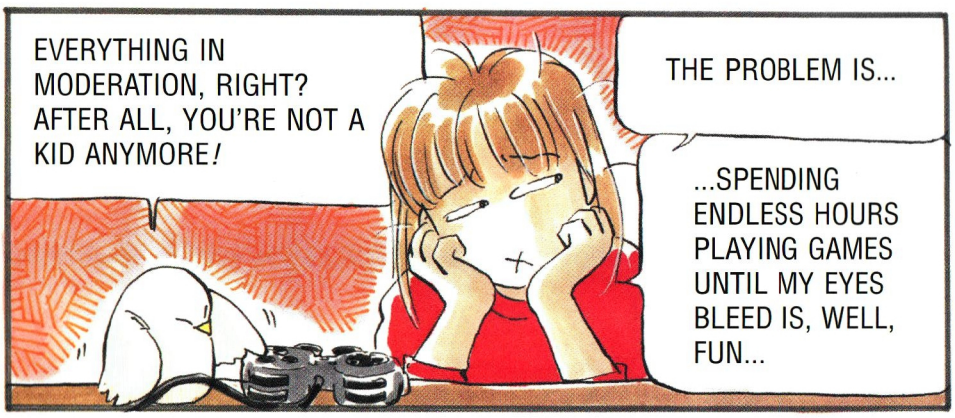
NOTHING BEATS VIDEO GAMES! BUT...

BY KYUBI TAKAKO






WITH RPG AND ACTION GAMES, AT LEAST YOU CAN GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK ONCE YOU GET THROUGH THEM...
THAT'S 'CAUSE PUZZLE GAMES LIKE TETRIS REALLY HAVE NO END.
...BUT THAT DOESN'T STOP VISIONS OF "TETRIS" BLOCKS FROM DANCING IN FRONT OF MY EYES.


EVERYTHING IN MODERATION, RIGHT? AFTER ALL, YOU'RE NOT A KID ANYMORE!
THE PROBLEM IS...
...SPENDING ENDLESS HOURS PLAYING GAMES UNTIL MY EYES BLEED IS, WELL, FUN...

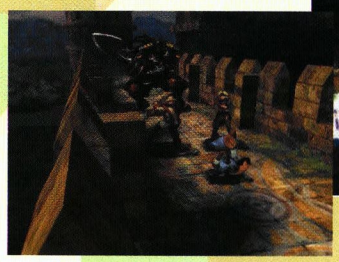
WITH THAT, THE GAME WE'RE MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO CLOSE OUT THE YEAR WITH IS KOEI'S "KURENAI NO UMI" ("CRIMSON SEA" TO ALL YOU WESTERN FOLK.) FOR THE XBOX. THE IDEA OF ACTUALLY PLAYING ONE OF THOSE MOVIES IN WHICH HORDES OF ALIENS JUST JUMP OUT AT YOU FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE IS TOO MUCH! OF COURSE, CAN'T FORGET ABOUT THE NEW "ZELDA" AND "METROID" TITLES!

PLAYSTATION2 Cinematics. Realism. Titles for an older audience. This is the name of PS2's game this winter.

RPG Unlimited ; SaGa

by SquareSoft

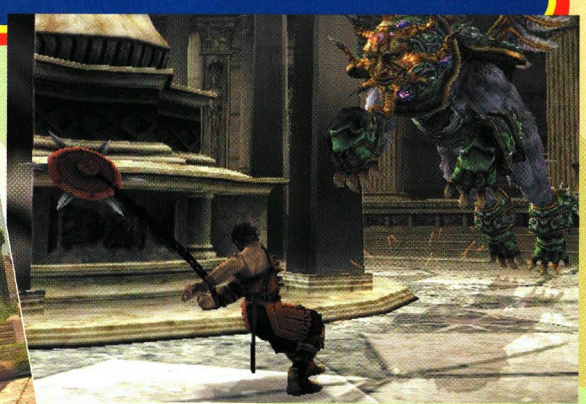
Square's popular "Saga" series boasts cumulative sales of 8 million units. Choose from one of seven available main characters and adventure your way through this latest installment.

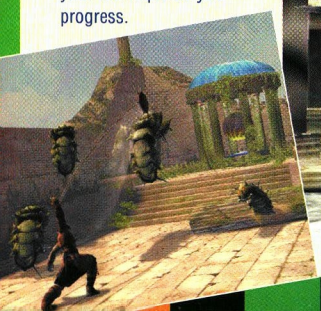


ACT Algoth No Senshi

by Tecmo

Flail wildly though your enemies in this action game that requires you to refine your technique as you progress.





When it comes to software availability, none of the other consoles can match the PlayStation 2. The platform has a monthly average of 30 new titles being released for it, with over 50 scheduled to hit store shelves this December alone. However, this situation in reality is serving in a sense to stab the console in the foot, as the sheer number of games available for it creates a difficulty in producing hit-selling titles. On top of this is the general indifference exhibited by consumers towards online gaming despite the string of announcements regarding the production of network-based titles since "Final Fantasy XI". One would therefore jump to the conclusion that Japanese gamers are not ready to make the transition from standard offline games just yet; however, this is due in actuality to the current lack of network environments that support network gaming on a wide-scale basis. In terms of hardware sales figures however, the PS2 maintains a strong lead over the other systems, leaving one to wonder how and if Sony will modify its approach to the market in the future.

With that, we bring you the PS2's top winter entries for this year, all of which represent offline games. The first is Square's **Unlimited;Saga**, the latest installment in the "Saga" RPG series that out of the company's franchises falls second only to "Final Fantasy" in terms of popularity. Unlike the story-intensive "Final Fantasy", "SaGa" puts a greater emphasis on the degree of freedom that the game offers. In strongly incorporating elements from table-based RPGs, this most recent installment in particular offers a completely different experience depending on the player.

A remake of an action game from the 8-bit era, **Algoth No Senshi** ("Rygar: The Legendary Adventure") places you in the shoes of a warrior battling hordes of magical creatures in an environment reminiscent of Ancient Greece and Rome. Interesting about this title is the unusual weapon brandished by the main character, a chain flail with a circular shield attached to the end of it. This provides a unique sense of exhilaration during the fight sequences that differs from that of sword and gun-based offerings.

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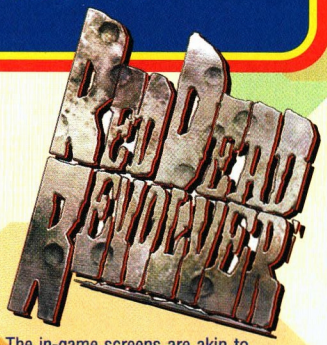
STG Red Dead Revolver

by Capcom



The in-game screens are akin to watching a Western on the big screen. Blow away enemy outlaws and win back the West!

Gangs of rowdy outlaws roaming the West come to life in this new breed of shooting title by Capcom called **Red Dead Revolver**. Get behind the sights of a lone gunman who rescues innocents in a deserted land where bullets speak louder than words! With A.I.-controlled enemy outlaws adapting to your shooting strategy, this title will force you to keep your eyes sharp no matter how many times you play it. Featuring one-on-one duels and the ability to shoot on horseback, **Red Dead Revolver** successfully captures the old-school flavor of an old John Wayne or Clint Eastwood Western flick.

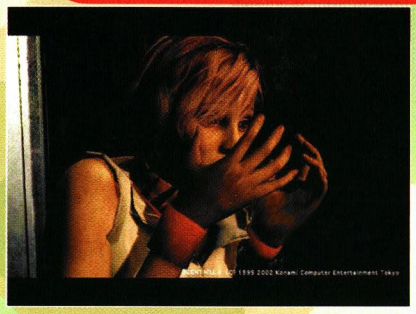
Experience the twisted world of modern horror in game form with Konami's **Silent Hill 3**, the third in the popular series. A passing fog has left the cursed town of Silent Hill transformed into an alternate world, and it's up to you as the main character to find your way out. Whether it be the blood and rust-laden surroundings or the onset of loneliness, helplessness and despair, Silent Hill 3 contains all the trappings of horror classics such as "Biohazard" but remains a unique experience in itself.

Another horror title making its appearance on the PS2 this winter is **Clock Tower 3**, also by Capcom. Reminiscent of Italian horror classics such as "Dario Argento", this terrifying game depicts a helpless young girl as she is relentlessly chased by hordes of grotesque,horrific beings. With reputed action movie director Fukasaku Kinji behind the production of this title, you can bet it will be one to look out for.

Finally, all's fair in love and war in **Sakura Taisen: Atsuki Chishio Ni** (translated as "Sakura Wars : The Road to Ardor"), the latest installment in Sega's smash *bishojo* game series that has taken *otaku* in Japan by storm. Join the familiar gang from the royal combat unit *Teikokukagekidan* on their latest adventure in this enhanced port from the original Saturn version.

ADV Sient Hill 3

by Konami



Representing the first female lead in the series, Heather's just a normal girl unfortunate enough to get stuck by herself in a monster-ridden town. Rest assured when we say this sequel will also scare the hell out of you!

ADV Clock Tower 3

by Capcom

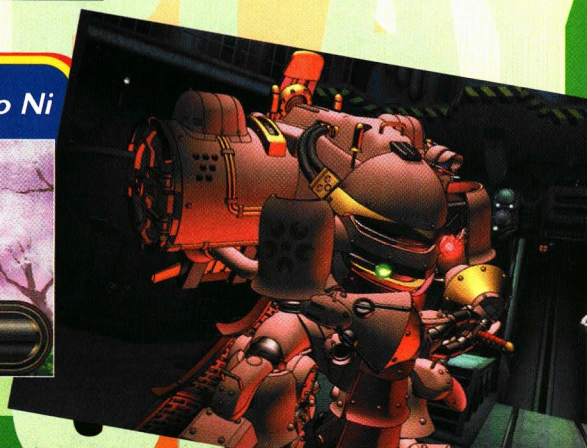
All poor Alyssa can do is run and hide in order to stay alive. Use your wits to avoid the threat of danger closing in - and be sure not to piss your pants in the process!

Was London fog supposed to be this deadly? Help Alyssa unmask the true nature of the monsters trying to kill her!

ADV Sakura Taisen Atsuki Chishio Ni

by Sega

The latest entry in this hit series brings together a multitude of *otaku*-recognized talents, including Hiroi Oji (Producer), Fujishima Kosuke (Character Design), and Akitaka Mika (Robot Design).



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XBOX

Xbox may be down in Japan, but it is hardly out for the count!

Dress up and accessorize your favorite shorty from **DOA3** in fly summer gear and send her off to the beach for some volleyball action! The game's solid cast of eight includes Japanese hotties Ayane, Hitomi and Kasumi. (Perhaps we're being a bit partial...?)

SPT

Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball

by Tecmo

The Xbox continues to perform sluggishly in the Japanese market despite superior hardware and a solid software lineup. Any number of reasons for this can be speculated on, but of certain mention should be the past lack of titles successfully appealing to the casual gamer in Japan. With a lack of killer apps to motivate consumers to purchase the hardware, at least in Japanese eyes, the Xbox has been in essence labeled a machine for hardcore gamers. It can also be said that given that the console and PC markets are entirely different entities in Japan, the name associated with the unit, Microsoft, has also caused the Xbox to be afflicted with this kind of hardcore image. It simply goes to show that regardless of how powerful your product is, without mainstream support it is not hard to fall by the market wayside. These factors among others have caused Microsoft to stumble out the gates in Japan.

However, that's all in the past. With a continuous stream of titles on their way this winter that look to appeal to the Japanese gamer, the big M is looking to make a comeback in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Certainly the most conspicuous of these is **Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball**, a spin-off of the popular fighting game series of the same name. Featuring a lot more than just the same gorgeous graphics of its namesake, **DOA:XBV** has gathered all eight female characters from the original series and put them in sexy bathing suits for a game of beach volleyball. Naturally, all of the "DOA" ladies are here in top form, showing off figures, curves and skin tone so realistically presented that it's not unlike gawking at models in a fashion magazine (Not to say we do.). In fact, the sheer realism of the imagery in this title has prompted Toys R' Us of Japan to slap restrictions on the title preventing its sale to gamers under 15.

Lest we fail to mention the actual volleyball element of the game, **DOA:XBV** also succeeds in bringing the fun and excitement of the popular beach-fest home. This one's for the fans!

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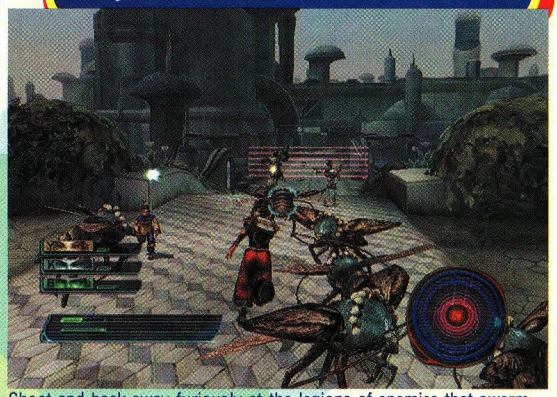
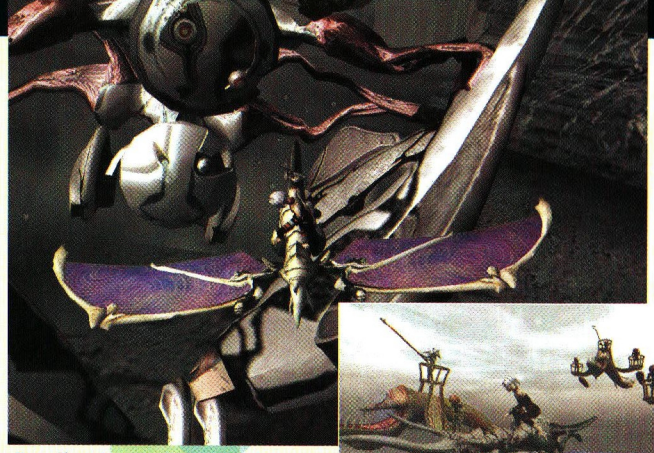
ACT Kurenai No Umi

by Koei



Shoot and hack away furiously at the legions of enemies that swarm about you in this action-fest reminiscent of "Starship Troopers"!



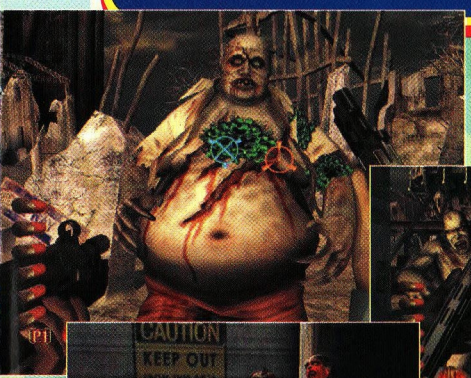
Even if you're not a fan of the genre, you'll be captivated by the aesthetics of this dragon-based title.

STG Panzer Dragoon Orta

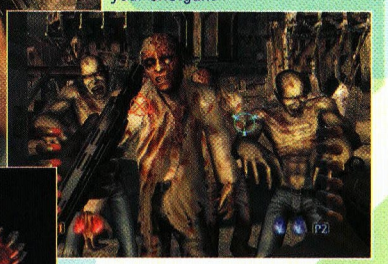
by Sega

STG The House Of the Dead III

by Sega



Pretty damn disgusting, huh? Splatter it across the screen with your shotgun!



Enjoy a game of zombie mutilation along with a friend and relieve some stress.

Medieval Japan meets it match in this perfect fusion of beauty and intensity.

ACT OTOGI

by From Software

The action spectacular **Kurenai No Umi** ("Crimson Sea") pits the main character Sho (Wait a minute...) and his complement of swords, guns and neopsionic capabilities against an unknown life form that has invaded from distant star. While the storyline that just screams "SF!" is of course welcome here, it's the movement of the enemy characters in literal clusters that'll grab your attention. We are not joking when we say you'll see Sho and his allies simultaneously swarmed by as many as 1,000 aggressive enemy creatures, consisting of everything from insects and arachnids to humanoids, on the same playing field. Keep your eyes out for this title - it'll be a definite keeper.

Panzer Dragoon Orta has you engaging in a dogfight while riding atop a dragon. This unique shooting title is the fourth in the "Panzer Dragoon" series that originated on the Sega Saturn. A considerable leap from the orthodox lizard-type dragons you're used to envisioning, the dragons in this world represent living and breathing weapons of war. Enjoy a sensation of flight radically different from that of a plane or helicopter as you soar through the air on your dragon while shooting 360°C around you in a surreal experience that only a video game can offer.

The latest installment in the gun-based horror series, **The House of the Dead III** is actually already available in the U.S.! We'll therefore keep this bit short and just mention that Japan will get this game in January of next year.

Highly reputed for its "Armored Core" robot simulation series and its sophisticated programming in games, From Software brings to us in its latest title **OTOGI** a dark fantasy world set in Japan's Heian Era (between the 8th and 9th Century). A samurai by the name of Raiko whose bloodline is cursed must atone for the sins of his kin by engaging in a violent struggle with magical beings in an alternate world. From its characters to the world presented within it, this multi-layered title effectively conveys a classic Japanese vision of life and death.

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G-ON RIDERS

ジオン・ライダース
G-onらいだーす♥

DATA
Publisher●Amuse Soft, Movic
Volume. 1-3●In Stores Now
Volume. 4●On sale Dec. 13
Price●¥5,600
URL●http://www.g-on.jp

MEGANEKKO!! TO ARMS!!

The year: 119 in the Showa Era. Earth is succumbing to a series of intermittent attacks by a hostile entity from outer space. Despite efforts by various countries to counter this alien threat, mankind had been unable to match the superior level of science employed by its attackers — until hope was born in the form a next-generation weapon conceived by mysterious scientist Dr. Sanada Mio that would be the key in repulsing invasion by alien forces. That weapon is G-on.

While normally kept hidden within a pair of glasses, G-on manifests itself by responding to intense feelings that makes one's heart beat (usually referred to as *tokimeki* in Japanese) generated by young girls in their early teens and metamorphosizing those feelings into an actual sword. Of course, any fan of *bishojo* anime would tell you that something like this is completely normal.

Enter the National Academy of *Seiseigawa Gakuen*, an educational institution founded for the purpose of assembling girls with particularly emotional and sensitive personalities from all over Japan and identifying those most ideal for utilizing G-on. Chosen as the final candidate for the bishojo warrior band known as "The Riders" is transfer student Kurama Yu-ki. Alongside with her *sempai* (seniors at school) Hoshikawa Yayoi and Arashiyama Sela, Yu-ki steps forward to represent the Earth's last line of defense*!*

With the plot summary out of the way, the first thing one should notice is that all the female characters appearing in this title are *meganekko* (girls who wear glasses), something radical for an anime in this genre. The concept of *meganekko* is one that many *otaku* here in Japan hold dear to heart, and **G-on Riders** incorporates it in full force. In fact, this title is packed to the brim with the kind of elements that fans crave in anime targeted towards an *otaku* audience: robot maids, visually underage female antagonists, the works*!* These in turn are layered on top of of a story incorporating the themes of youth, promises and trust often tackled within the genre. While this encapturing of such of a large variety of elements in one anime has created a split of opinion between Japanese fans regarding whether the title is "pleasantly all-inclusive" or "simply overdone", we find the opinion of "taking it one more step forward" is the perfect way to describe **G-on Riders**. The depictions of The Riders' daily life as high school girls, complete with sailor outfits, after-school activities and boarding houses, also make this title perfect for studying up on the typical life of a Japanese high school student*!* (Insert "Yeah, right" here.)
But seriously, if an anime featuring young girls kicking serious ass is what you're looking for, rest assured that you can't go wrong with **G-on Riders**.

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PRINCESS TUTU

DATA
Broadcast by Kids Station
Friday, 8:45 p.m. (approx. 15 min.)
URL●http://www.imagica.com/shop/tutu

プリンセス チュチュ

PRINCESS TUTU PIROUETTES HER WAY INTO THE HEARTS OF ANIME FANS!

The new *shojo* ("girls'") anime **Princess Tutu** is brought to us by the same team of animator Ito Ikuko and director Sato Junichi that has produced a number of anime series that have enchanted girls (and maybe a few boys) throughout Japan, including "Bishojo Senshi Sailor Moon" and "Mahotsukai Tai." Ito, who oversaw the original planning and character design, claims to have been envisioning a fantasy incorporating ballet for ten years.

Tutu is set in Kinkanmachi, your average everyday town featuring your average park, theater, river, forest, shops and people. Well, it would be if it wasn't for the talking cats and alligators that live alongside those average people. Yes Toto, it's safe to say that we're definitely not in Kansas anymore. With its steep wall enclosures and a giant steeple in the center of town as its symbol, this is Kinkanmachi. There's also a school, Kinkan Academy, which has a long tradition of instruction in the arts. It is there that we find our heroine, Ahiru (which means "duck") studying ballet. Although she's somewhat scatterbrained, Ahiru puts everything she's got into whatever she does. She has two good friends, Piké and Lilié, who sometimes get mad at her, sometimes tease her, but are always there for her.

Ahiru has a major crush on an older classmate of hers, Myuto. A good-looking but very quiet guy who's also great dancer, Myuto is the prince of her dreams. But for some reason, he always has a lonely look in his eyes, and Ahiru is determined make him smile, just once! And so goes the story of Ahiru – concealing this vow in her heart while trying to stay out of trouble with her strict teacher Neko-Sensei as she strives to do her best in her ballet lessons.

Myuto is perceived as a quiet boy, but the truth runs deeper – in fact, he is missing part of his heart, and therefore feels nothing. But Myuto isn't the only one – many of the other residents of Kinkanmachi are missing pieces of their hearts. Ahiru, who in time goes on to become the legendary **Princess Tutu** through a mysterious power, is faced with the task of finding and returning those missing parts. Will Ahiru be able to fix Myuto's heart and dance a pas-de-deux with her Prince Charming?

A fantasy world, ballet, Prince Charming, magical transformations – full of the stuff of young girls' dreams, this is one of those pure anime series for young girls that we haven't seen for some time. Episode titles are taken from those of famous ballet songs, and when Princess **Tutu** is fighting to return the pieces of lost hearts, the battle takes the form of a ballet. Just watching this series will make you an expert on this elegant dance form! Even today, ballet is something that young girls in Japan aspire to do. The series at a glance appears to pack in plenty of gags and surreal touches such as Ahiru's rival in love being an anteater, making it popular with a younger crowd. However, the story itself is so well-written that adult anime fans can enjoy it as well. In this respect, **Tutu** is truly an balanced series that anyone can get hooked on. With many of the missing pieces of the Kinkanmachi townspeople representing negative emotions such as sadness, Ahiru is confronted with the difficult dilemma of whether or not it is really in their favor to make their hearts whole again. Perhaps it's when Ahiru is able to solve this for herself that she will have become a true Princess.

Hot on the heels of the first season, which consisted of thirteen 30-minute episodes, the new season will feature twenty-six 15-minute ones. Growing in popularity by the day, Princess **Tutu** is not just one for the girls! Guys, be sure to check it out as well!

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SPACE CHANNEL 5

TO SAVE THE GALAXY, YOU'VE GOTTA BE A DANCING QUEEN!!

DATA
Publisher● SEGA Platform● PlayStation 2
Genre● Musical Action
Release● Dec. 12, 2002 (tentative – Japan only)
Price● ¥3,000

Is it dancing? Is it fighting? Whatever it is, it's musical, and it's now available on PlayStation 2! **SpaceChannel 5 (SC5)** was originally released on Dreamcast in 1999, and its pop musical aesthetics and cool sound made it a cult hit, both in Japan and around the world.

SC5 takes place in 2499 with a sudden invasion by the Moroliens, evil aliens who want to conquer Earth by forcing people to...DANCE!! The horror!! (It might work, at that. Anyone seeing me dance would pretty much die of laughter, if nothing else.). All that stands between the Earth and total dancilation is intrepid (and need we add, gorgeous) girl reporter, Ulala.

While reporting on the invasion for TV station SpaceChannel 5, she decides to take on the Moroliens, mano a mano. Sort of like "American Bandstand," only Dick Clark is played by aliens.

And as a special surprise, world pop superstar Michael Jackson appears as the character Space Michael! (No, no, it's too easy a target. Not going there...) Michael, a well-known game *otaku*, was so impressed by the game that he agreed to participate, lending his voice and support to the project. Michael also showed up on the Mega Drive (Genesis) with a leading role in SEGA's "Michael Jackson's Moon Walker." In **SC5**, he does things like try to eat the heroine (...must...control...urge...to...mock....).

Anyway, to progress in the game, you have to follow directions to a tee and keep the right rhythm. The rules of the game are way easy – just remember the dance moves the Moroliens make, and repeat them exactly. Occasionally the Moroliens will attack, and when they do, pressing the **X** button will shoot a beam from your gun to drive them off, accompanied by your exclaiming "Chuu!" Pressing the **O** button rescues other humans being forced to dance with a "Hey!" – and turns them into backup dancers for Ulala. But if you screw it up, both the music and Ulala's dancing lose their zip. The mood of the game changes considerably depending on your success or failure, providing an enjoyable atmosphere that makes you want to play the game over and over. The other dancing characters are really detailed, and it's a blast to see what "Space Japanese" might look like. The gags come fast and furious, and most of them work.

The music, the gameplay, the graphics – there's just nothing to complain about! Don't worry about the complex segments, just let loose and go with the flow! **SC5 Part 2**, which was released for PlayStation 2 in Japan first (in February) will be available at the same time as **Part 1**, for the same low price of ¥3,000. Ulala fans (particulary those with shallow pockets), rejoice!!

SEGA CORPORATION, 1999
Reprogrammed by UGA.

CLOSE-UP!

SHINOBI

DATA

Publisher● SEGA Developer● Overworks
Platform● PlayStation 2 Genre● Action/Adventure
Release● In Stores Now Price● US$49.95

ALL THE TECHNIQUE OF THE NINJA AT YOUR COMMAND, WITH INTENSE SWORDPLAY TO BOOT!

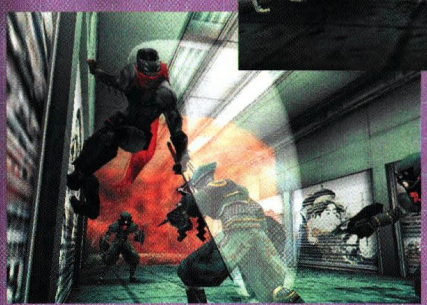
It's the beginning of the 21st Century. Tokyo has been leveled by a monster quake, the once vibrant city now a pile of rubble. Suddenly, a huge castle made of gold appears from out of nowhere. Hotsuma, current head of the *Oboro* ninja clan, takes on the mission of saving Tokyo, and sneaks into the capital city alone. There, he faces his family's greatest enemies in battle...

In 1989, Sega released the masterpiece action game "The Super Shinobi" for it's Mega Drive (Genesis), which went on to become a worldwide hit. Now, in the 21st Century, Shinobi is enjoying an well-earned revival! Produced by Overworks, which has a great reputation for developing high-quality games like "Sakura Taisen," this game has expectations running to epic proportions.

The best thing about **Shinobi** has to be the many different varieties of *ninjutsu* available. Hotsuma can run across the face of walls or in the air just as well as he can on the ground. With the Stealth Dash, he can move ultrafast, leaving behind only a spectral double. Use this technique, called *bunshin no jutsu*, when he's surrounded by hordes of enemies, and you can change a desperate situation into one where you eliminate your enemies and remain the only one standing. Another nifty trick is the Double Jump – using "footholds" in the air, you never need to set foot on the ground, and can even fight in mid-air. If you throw a shuriken while using the Double Jump, it becomes the thunderous *Hassoushuriken*, which stops your enemies in their tracks. Use any of these techniques in combination to speedily mop up even the most fearsome of adversaries.

Hotsuma faces a number of common foot soldiers, but they definitely aren't the only enemies in his way. In Tokyo, now a demon capital, Hotsuma must also face beings such as *Karasutengu*, who has black wings like a raven, and *Inari*, a fox spirit – just two of the evil *Shikigami* (enslaved spirits). The evil *Shikigami* wander about, some possessing unmanned helicopters and tanks, trying to impede Hotsuma's progress. Of course, there are many ninja present among the enemy, including some from Hotsuma's own *Oboro* clan. All ninja in the *Oboro* clan possess superior strength and skills, including fire techniques, sword fighting and kenpo. Ninja fighting ninja – it doesn't get more intense than this.

There are a lot of different ninja techniques, but especially worthy of mention is the beautiful swordplay. Landing a *Tate* (an incredibly fast sword stroke) is the coolest thing since sliced bread! Feel the exhilaration of cutting through enemy after enemy! At the core of the game is the development of Hotsuma's dramatic story. The background of the story is based on the *Onmyoudou*, an occult divination system based on the Taoist theory of the five elements. Any way you look at it, if you dig ninja, you are going to go nuts for this game. Try your own hand at some updated ninja action!



Shinobi™

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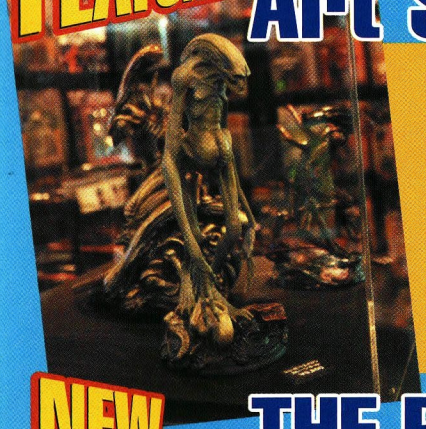
NEXT ISSUE PREVIEW

ISSUE #5

SPECIAL FEATURE

There's no law dictating what figures have to look like, and this figure maker shows you just that!

Art Storm



Art Storm's unique figure interpretations of greats such as "Devilman" have earned the company mad respect among fans. Check out our one-on-one interview with Art Storm's president and a comprehensive introduction of its figure lineup.

NEW ARTICLE

THE RAIJIN ART GALLERY

If you like our blazing covers, you'll absolutely dig the removable pin-ups to be inserted in every issue of RAIJIN G&A starting next issue! A Nirasawa Yasushi illustration, the basis for a figure by Artstorm, marks the first work in this high quality visual collection!

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Anime Focus
SHE, THE ULTIMATE WEAPON

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SEGA OF AMERICA
HEDGEHOG EXPRESS
THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD III

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